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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

23 May 1960

HR-11/69
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8/6/71

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Resumption of High Altitude Flights in the
Berlin Corridor (S)

Reference: JCSM-84-60 Dated 4 March 1960 * 9172

(12:00 PM)

By telcon with Mr. Richard R. Day on Friday, 13 May 1960, Mr. Roche, Administrative Secretary, OSD, indicated that Mr. Douglas did not intend to answer the reference because the President decided against such flights (See Dept. of State Message to Bonn 1928, dated 8 March 1960). A memorandum had been prepared for Secretary Douglas' signature as a reply to the reference, but he would not sign it. Accordingly, JCSM-84-60 was deleted from the Monthly Report to the Secretary of Defense (See CM-536-60 dated 16 May 1960).

12 Oct 82
Paul M. Kearney
PAUL M. KEARNEY
Administrative Asst
to General Twining

Copy for:

Secretary, JCS

TELEGRAM Department of State

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Following based on uncleared memorandum of conversation today between Merchant and British and French Ambassadors:

Re proposed high altitude flights in Berlin corridors Merchant said that less than two weeks ago we instituted re-examination of technical factors involved. We have now reached conclusion with respect C-130s that there is no present operational requirement for flights above 10,000 feet in corridors. Question had been given final review with President this afternoon and decision reached that we would not repeat nor favor resumption these flights or giving notification to Soviets of our intention to do so.

At press conference tomorrow, although we will not volunteer comment, likelihood is Secretary will be queried re high flights. In this event he proposes make statement along following lines:

BEGIN STATEMENT. The three Western Powers have always maintained that they have if need be the right to fly planes over 10,000 feet in the Berlin corridors in the discharge of their responsibilities in Berlin. This was explicitly

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explicitly stated by this government in its note to the Soviet Government in April of last year, at which time we made it plain that flights by aircraft of the United States do not require any prior agreement from the Soviet Element and that the United States never has recognized and does not recognize any limitation on the right to fly at any altitude in the corridors. The question as to whether there is any operational need to exercise this right is one which is under constant review with our British and French allies. However a final review following the President's return has revealed that there is no present operational requirement for such high altitude flights.

If and when there should be operational requirements for such high altitude flights, they will be undertaken. END STATEMENT

Merchant noted that, while under airlift conditions or with excessively heavy traffic requiring stacking, there might be need for ceiling above 10,000 feet, this was not now the case. We did not wish to take action for which there was no operational need and which could therefore be considered provocative and unnecessary.

Cecilia said that British view was likewise to oppose ~~REINTRODUCING~~ flights motivated by political considerations.

In response to query by Alphand as to whether original American decision to resume flights had not involved political consideration of reaffirmation of our right, Merchant replied that there had been mixture of motives but that proposal had been predicated on assumption there was demonstrable operational requirement.

Alphand

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Alphand said that in view of leaks, he feared Soviets would interpret decision as sign of weakness. Therefore must avoid giving impression of retreat. Merchant noted this was precisely purpose of proposed statement. Nothing has been said officially on subject. Alsop had reported leak and others had picked it up. It was regrettable, of course, that technical information is now in our possession had not been available a year ago.

HERTER